

AMENDMENT

In the Claims

Please amend Claims 1-38 as shown below.

1. (currently amended) A method to select an agent from a group of agents of a contact center to service a contact, at a contact center comprising the steps of:

obtaining performance data for each agent in the group of agents;

generating a first and a second performance indicator for each agent in the group of agents in response to computer-based processing of the performance data;

~~representing the performance data on a performance scale~~ for each agent in the group of agents, computing a third performance indicator as a weighted combination of the first performance indicator and the second performance indicator;

comparing the third performance indicator of ~~performance data on the performance scale~~ for a first agent in the group of agents ~~and~~ to the third performance indicator of a second agent in the group of agents; and

responsive to the comparing step, selecting the first agent to service the contact.

2. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

maintaining a ~~current~~ record of qualifications of each agent in the group of agents;

obtaining contact parameters that describe the contact; and

comparing at least some portion of the ~~current~~ record of qualifications of at least one agent in the group of agents to the contact parameters, ~~and~~ wherein

the selecting step comprises

responsive to the step of comparing the third performance indicator data-step and the step of comparing qualifications at least some portion of the record of qualifications step, selecting the first agent to service the contact.

3. (currently amended) The method of Claim 2, wherein the maintaining step comprises:
 - storing the ~~current~~ record of qualifications of each agent in the group of agents in a database on a computer-accessible medium; and
 - updating the ~~current~~ record as soon as new qualification data is available, ~~and~~ wherein the method further comprises the step of
 - accessing the ~~current~~ record of qualifications of the at least one agent in the group following the updating step, and
 - wherein the ~~comparing~~ step of comparing at least some portion of the record of qualifications comprises comparing qualifications accessed in the accessing step to the contact parameters.
4. (original) The method of Claim 3, wherein the qualifications comprise at least one of personality, cognitive ability, and skills and competencies.
5. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the ~~representing~~ step of computing the third performance indicator comprises ~~representing the performance data of each agent in the group of agents on a performance scale that comprises at least two performance indicators, and wherein the comparing step further comprises weighing one the first~~ performance indicator of the at least two performance indicators more heavily than the second ~~other~~ performance indicator while including a contribution from both the first and the second performance indicators.
6. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1, ~~wherein the performance scale comprises at least two performance indicators, and wherein the comparing step further comprises weighing one the first~~ performance indicator of the at least two performance indicators more heavily than the second ~~other~~ performance indicator on the basis of at least one of call volume, management input, operational goals, and compliance statistics.

7. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 [[5]], further comprising the step of determining a state of the contact center, and

wherein the comparing step further comprises weighing one ~~performance indicator~~ of the first and second ~~at least two~~ performance indicators more heavily than the other ~~performance indicator~~ as a function of the state.

8. (currently amended) The method of Claim 7, wherein the step of determining the state comprises acquiring current activity from an activity monitor.

9. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of determining a contact center state, and

wherein the comparing step further comprises weighing the first performance indicator ~~of the first agent and the second agent~~ based ~~on the basis of~~ the contact center state.

10. (currently amended) The method of Claim 9, wherein the step of determining the contact center state comprises forecasting the contact center state on the basis of historical state, and

wherein the comparing step further comprises weighing the first performance indicator ~~of the first agent and the second agent~~ on the basis of the forecasted contact center state.

11. (currently amended) The method of Claim 9, wherein the step of determining the contact center state comprises forecasting the contact center state on the basis of a current state, and

wherein the comparing step further comprises weighing the first performance indicator relative to the second performance indicator ~~of the first agent and the second agent~~ on the basis of the forecasted contact center state.

12. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 [[5]], wherein the contact comprises is an incoming call.

13. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 [[5]], wherein the contact is comprises an outbound call.

14. (currently amended) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in Claim 1 [[5]].

15. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of determining a rate of contacts serviced by the contact center, and

wherein the ~~representing step~~ first performance indicator comprises ~~representing the performance data of each agent in the group of agents with~~ a quality metric and the second performance indicator comprises a handling time metric, and

wherein the comparing step further comprises weighing the quality metric more heavily than the handling time metric if the contact rate is essentially below a threshold and weighing the handling time metric more heavily than the quality metric if the contact rate is essentially above the threshold.

16. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of determining revenue of the contact center, ~~and~~

~~wherein the representing step comprises representing the performance data of each agent in the group of agents with a first metric and a second metric, and~~

wherein the comparing step ~~further~~ comprises weighing the first performance indicator ~~metric~~ more heavily than the second performance indicator ~~metric~~ if revenue is essentially below a threshold and weighing the second performance indicator ~~metric~~ more heavily than the first performance indicator ~~metric~~ if revenue is essentially above the threshold.

17. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the ~~representing step comprises representing the performance data of each agent in the group of agents on a performance scale that comprises exactly one~~ first performance indicator comprises a result of a personality assessment, and wherein the second performance indicator comprises a result of an agent-contact interaction.

18. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the first performance indicator of each agent comprises a result of a computer-based test and wherein the second performance indicator comprises an indication of performance demonstrated while servicing contacts further comprising the step of determining a state of the contact center, and

~~wherein the representing step comprises representing the performance data of each agent in the group of agents on a performance scale that comprises exactly one performance indicator,~~
and

~~wherein the comparing step further comprises choosing the performance indicator on the basis of the contact center state.~~

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19. (currently amended) A method to manage operational effectiveness in a contact center comprising:

receiving ~~an~~ a first indicator value representing agent performance ~~that an~~ for at least one agent in of the contact center achieved while processing contacts;

receiving a ~~value indicating a contact center state~~ second indicator value representing a result of testing the agent while the agent was detached from processing contacts;

generating an index that is a function of the first indicator ~~contact center state~~ value and the second indicator value; and

adjusting an operation ~~at function in~~ of the contact center on the basis of the index.

20. (original) The method of Claim 19, wherein the adjusting step comprises selecting a resource to deploy in the contact center on the basis of the index.

21. (currently amended) The method of Claim 19, wherein the adjusting step comprises selecting ~~an~~ the agent to service a contact on the basis of the ~~agent's~~ index.

22. (currently amended) The method of Claim 19, wherein the generating step of ~~receiving an indicator value~~ comprises generating the index as a function of ~~receiving a first indicator value and a second indicator value, and wherein the index is a function of the contact center state, the first indicator value, and the second indicator value.~~

23. (currently amended) The method of Claim 19, wherein the index ~~further~~ ranks each agent in a plurality of agents, ~~the group, and~~

~~wherein the step of receiving an indicator value comprises receiving a first indicator value and a second indicator value, and~~

~~wherein the index is a function of the contact center state, the first indicator value, and the second indicator value~~

24. (currently amended) The method of Claim 22, wherein:
the contact center state comprises a characterization of the center's rate of servicing contacts;

the first indicator represents time-based performance of the ~~at least one~~ agent; and

the function is operative to weigh the first indicator more heavily when the contact center state is above a threshold than when the contact center state is below the threshold.

25. (currently amended) The method of Claim 22, wherein the ~~determining step~~
~~comprises forecasting~~ the contact center state comprises a forecast based on using historical data.

26. (original) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in Claim 19.

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27. (currently amended) A system for selecting a first agent over a second agent to perform a task in a contact center, the system comprising:

a first terminal operative to interface with the first agent and a second terminal operative to interface with the second agent;

an agent performance monitor in communication with the first terminal and the second terminal, the performance monitor operative to determine a first indicator of agent performance and a second indicator of agent performance for the each of the first agent and the second agent;

a state monitor operative to determine ~~the~~ a state of the contact center; and

a ranking system in communication with the agent performance monitor and the ~~call~~ state monitor, the ranking system operative to:

compute a first index value for the first agent using the state and the first agent's first and second indicators of agent performance;

compute a second index value for the second agent using the state and the second agent's first and second indicators of agent performance; and

select the first agent to perform the task based on a comparison between the ~~because of first index value and is one of higher or lower than~~ the second index value.

28. (currently amended) The system of Claim 27, wherein the task comprises receiving an incoming call, and the system further comprises a call distribution component in communication with the ranking system, wherein the call distribution component is operative to route the incoming call to the ~~first~~ selected agent.

29. (currently amended) The system of Claim 27, wherein the state comprises call volume ~~and the function is further operative to increase the index value's dependence on the first indicator in response to increased call volume.~~

30. (currently amended) The system of Claim 27, wherein the ~~index~~ state is ~~also~~ a function of management input.

31. (currently amended) The system of Claim 27, wherein the state comprises sales ~~and the function is further operative to increase the index value's dependence on the first indicator in response to increased sales.~~

32. (currently amended) The system of Claim 27, wherein the state comprises a management directive ~~and the function is further operative to increase the index value's dependence on the first indicator in response to the management directive.~~

33. (currently amended) The system of Claim 27, wherein the state comprises compliance statistics ~~and the function is further operative to increase the index value's dependence on the first indicator in response to the compliance statistics.~~

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34. (currently amended) A method to select an agent from a ~~group~~ plurality of agents of a contact center to service a contact, ~~at a contact center~~ comprising the steps of:

producing a performance measurement for each agent in the plurality of agents in response to monitoring contact service episodes;

producing a performance predictor for each agent in the plurality of agents in response to administering a test that evaluates at least one of an innate ability and a personality trait;

generating a performance indicator for each agent in the ~~group~~ plurality of agents based on a weighted combination of the performance measurement and the performance predictor; and

ranking each agent in the ~~group~~ plurality of agents on the basis of the performance indicator; and

selecting a preferred agent to service the contact on the basis of the preferred agent's rank.

35. (currently amended) The method of Claim 34, further comprising the step of determining a state of the contact center,

wherein the ~~ranking~~ selecting step comprises selecting the preferred agent to service the contact according to the preferred agent's rank and the state of the contact center ~~weighing the performance indicator for each agent in the group of agents according to the contact center state and ranking each agent in the group of agents on the basis of the weighted performance indicator.~~

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36. (currently amended) A method to select an agent from a plurality group of agents of a contact center to service a contact ~~at a contact center~~, comprising:

generating a plurality of performance indicators for each agent in the plurality group of agents; ~~and~~

computing an index for each agent in the plurality group of agents using the generated plurality of performance indicators as [[a]] computational inputs, ~~wherein the indices predict each agent's relative contribution to the center's operational effectiveness by servicing the contact; and~~

selecting a preferred agent to service the contact on the basis of the computed indices.

37. (currently amended) The method of Claim 36, wherein generating the plurality of performance indicators comprises:

generating a first performance indicator in response to administering an agent test via computer; and

generating a second performance indicator based on a result achieved during an agent encounter with a contact ~~the preferred agent has the highest index in the group of agents.~~

38. (currently amended) The method of Claim 36, wherein the computed indices predict each agent's relative contribution ~~preferred agent is predicted to contribute more to the center's operational effectiveness than each of the other agents in the group.~~

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